

TERRORISM, SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND BOMB THREATS

Whilst the chances of you being directly affected by any attack are extremely rare, it is important to be prepared and know how to respond / protect yourself if the need arises. Please read the following and adhere to instructions on:

- How to deal with a suspicious package
- How to deal with a bomb threat (received via telephone, email or social media)
- How to respond to a terrorist attack

Minimising the Risk – Basic Security

Protection starts with basic security - the harder it is for an intruder to enter our premises the less likely it is we are to suffer an attack. **Always be vigilant.**

Terrorists rely on the complacency of staff and their reluctance to challenge people acting suspiciously, so always be vigilant, reporting anyone acting suspiciously or any suspect package to the duty holder(s) responsible for security at your church building.

Good Housekeeping

Good housekeeping, which ensures that all areas are kept clean and tidy, will reduce further the opportunity for a suspicious package or explosive device to be planted undetected. If your premises are tidy and you know where objects are kept you are more likely to spot something which looks suspicious.

Assessing the Threat

In all cases where a bomb threat is received or a suspicious package is identified, the person responsible for security will immediately inform the Police by calling 999 and discuss what action should be taken, considering all known factors.

It may be decided to disregard the threat or move all staff and public to a place of safety. Evacuation implies that at some stage a search of premises will have to be carried out before the building can be re-occupied.

If it is decided to evacuate the building, the person responsible for security will sound the fire alarm and ask staff and visitors to leave the building by the normal evacuation routes as quickly as possible.

How to Deal with Suspicious Packages

- If you receive or find a suspicious item which cannot be accounted for in any way, do not touch or move it
- Inform the person responsible for security in your workplace
- Dial 999 and follow police guidance
- Do not use mobile phones or two-way radios in the cleared area or within 15 metres of the suspect package

- Clear the area immediately
- Do not attempt to open the letter or package
- Avoid unnecessary handling
- Keep it separate so it is easily identifiable

How to identify a suspicious package, indicators to suspicious deliveries/mail

General indicators that a delivered item may be of concern include:

- Unexpected item, especially if hand delivered
- A padded envelope (Jiffy Bag) or other bulky package
- Additional inner envelope or other contents that may be difficult to remove
- Labelling or excessive sealing that encourages opening at a particular end or in a particular way
- Oddly shaped or lopsided
- Envelope flap stuck down completely (normally gummed envelope flaps leave slight gaps at edges)
- Marked “to be opened only by...” or “Personal” or “Confidential”
- Unexpected or unusual origin (postmark and/or return address)
- No return address or return address that cannot be verified
- Poorly or inaccurately addressed, address printed unevenly or unusually
- Unfamiliar writing or unusual style
- Unusual postmark or no postmark
- More stamps than needed for size or weight of package
- Greasy or oily stains emanating from the package
- Odours emanating from the package

Explosive or incendiary indicators

Rough handling through the postal system means an item received is unlikely to detonate if moved. Any attempt at opening it may set it off or release the contents.

- Unusually heavy or uneven weight distribution
- Small hole(s) in the envelope or packaging

Chemical Biological or Radiological (CBR) indicators

Additional indicators include:

- Powders or liquids emanating from the package
- Wrapping stained by liquid leakage
- Unexpected items or materials found in the package on opening (loose or in a container) such as powdered, crystalline or granular solids; sticky substances or residues
- Unexpected odours observed on opening
- Sudden onset of illness or irritation of skin, eyes and nose

Actions upon discovery of any suspicious delivered item:

- Avoid unnecessary handling
- If you are holding the item, put it down on a cleared flat surface
- Keep it separate so it is easily identifiable
- Do not move it

Move away immediately (secure the room to prevent unauthorised access)

- Clear immediate area and each adjacent room, including rooms above and below
- If there is any suggestion of chemical, biological or radiological materials, move those directly affected to a safe location close to the incident – keep these individuals separate from those not involved

- Prevent others approaching or accessing the cleared areas
- Do not use mobile phones or two-way radios in the cleared area or within 15 metres of the suspect package
- Communicate regularly with staff, visitors and the public

Notify Police

- If the item has been opened or partially opened prior to being deemed suspicious, it is vital that this is communicated to the police
- Ensure informants and witnesses remain available to brief the police, and that the accuracy of their observations is preserved
- Encourage witnesses to immediately record their observations in writing, and discourage them from discussing the incident or their observations with others prior to the arrival of the police

Telephone Bomb Threat

It may be that most telephone threats turn out to be hoaxes but nevertheless initially **you should treat every call as genuine.**

Refer to (Appendix 3)– Bomb Threats Checklist.

Stay calm and talk to the caller, write down the exact words used, do not interpret. Listen for clues as to sex, age, speech, accent and the manner and style in which the message was given. Remember the more information you can obtain, the easier it will be to decide if the warning is genuine.

Bomb Threat Sent via Text, Email or Social Media

- Do not reply to, forward or delete the message
- Notify the person responsible for security in your workplace
- If sent via email, note the address
- If sent via social media, what application has been used and what is the username/ID?
- Dial 999 and follow police guidance
- Save and print the message – hand copy to the police and the person responsible for security
- Preserve all web log files for your organisation to help the police investigation (as a guide, 7 days prior to the threat message and 48 hours after)

Terrorist attack within the workplace, e.g. firearms or weapons attack

If you are involved in a terrorist attack, the advice is to RUN; HIDE; TELL.

RUN

- If you can, locate the threat using sight and hearing
- If there is a safe route, run
- Insist others go with you, but don't let their hesitation slow you down
- Don't waste time filming videos or collecting belongings

HIDE

- Running to safety is your best option, but if you can't run, hide
- If possible, lock yourself in a room with solid walls
- Barricade yourself in and move away from the door
- Find cover that can withstand threats such as a gun or knife attack

- You may need to use any hiding place that puts you out of sight of the attacker
- Be very quiet and still
- Silence your phone and turn it off vibrate
- Avoid any noise or movement that will attract the attacker
- Stay hidden until you are rescued – this may take some time

TELL

- Call 999 only when you are completely safe to do so
- Listen carefully to the operator and give as much information as you can
- If it is safe to do so, stop other people going towards the danger

Minimise the Risk of a Terrorism Incident

You may not be able to stop a terrorist attack but you can minimise the risk by having clear procedures for dealing with the threat:

- Ensure that security is adequate for your church building and premises or parts of the building(s) that are usually occupied or regularly used, and that groups and regular building users comply with security measures and controls.
- Make sure staff and volunteers are constantly vigilant, challenging and/or reporting any person acting suspiciously and/or suspect packages.
- Keep your area clean and tidy.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to know their area of the building intimately so that they can spot quickly anything which looks out of place.
- Designate a duty holder(s) to be responsible for dealing with security issues and make sure that all staff and volunteers know their identity and where they can be contacted if needed.
- Make sure your staff and volunteers know what to do if they see a suspicious package.
- Inform your staff and volunteers how to handle a telephone bomb threat (refer to appendix 3 Telephone Bomb Threat Checklist).
- Make sure any contractors, visitors at meetings or to your area of the building have signed in the Contractor/Visitor Log Book and are identified as having authorised access.